



WHAT'S NEW?

from the
Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST)

22 May 03

- **TSP Catch-Up Contributions Enrollment Delayed.** Implementation of this program for each Federal agency has always been dependent on payroll and personnel systems being adapted to allow the contributions to be withheld. Within the Department of Defense (DoD), these systems will not be ready by the July/August 2003 dates the Thrift Savings Plan is publicizing. We anticipate the systems will be ready in September 2003, but that date is not firm. When we have a concrete implementation date, we'll let you know. Until then, catch-up contribution enrollments will not be accepted. For more information, visit the BEST Homepage and click on "Thrift Savings Plan."

19 May 03

- **Flexible Spending Account Open Season Has Begun - Actual Enrollment is on Hold.** The FSAFEDS web site is up and SHPS customer service representatives are ready and available to take calls. The Office of Personnel Management advised today that employees who are interested in enrolling in one or both of the available FSA accounts should call or go to the FSAFEDS web site during the open season and leave their names (and E-mail address). When they're ready to accept enrollments, OPM/SHPS will notify these individuals. OPM advises the reason for delay in enrollment is as follows: "In response to Agency-level inquiries and in anticipation of possible Congressional action, we've accelerated our review of agency options regarding administrative fees associated with the FSAFEDS Program, as well as necessary changes to billing structures in place for the 2003 Plan Year. We expect this review to be completed shortly, at which time we will begin to accept FSA enrollments."

13 May 03

- **Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Program Initial Open Season Begins 19 May 2003 and ends 20 June 2003.** Air Force civilian employees may enroll in the FSA program during this initial open season. However, because the payroll system will not be ready to take allotments until sometime in September, and the exact date is still unknown, the initial Plan Year for all DoD employees (which includes Air Force employees) will be 1 September through 31 December 2003 instead of 1 July - 31 December 2003. Expenses incurred prior to 1 September 2003 will not be eligible for reimbursement. Beginning 19 May, employees will enroll in the FSA program directly with SHPS, the FSA program administrator, on the Federal FSA Web site at www.fsafeds.com, or via a toll-free phone call with an SHPS customer service representative at 1-877-372-3337. SHPS customer service representatives will be available from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, to assist with enrollment or provide information regarding the program.

5 May 03

- **Adjustment Bill for Uncollected Long Term Care Insurance Premiums.** Some Long Term Care (LTC) insurance program enrollees may receive an "adjustment bill" in the next few weeks for premiums which LTC Partners was unable to collect via payroll deduction. A missed

premium can happen for various reasons, such as an employee entering into a nonpay status; a paycheck insufficient to cover the premium; or a timing issue with a particular pay period prevented the premium from being deducted through payroll deduction. Employees will be billed directly for missed premiums. This will not affect current or future premiums -- they will continue to be paid via payroll deduction. The adjustment bills are for past due premiums and payroll cannot make adjustments to an employee's payroll deduction for any uncollected FLTCIP premiums. If you receive an adjustment bill and have questions, please call LTC Partners' Customer Service Center at 1-800-LTC-FEDS (1-800-582-3337) or for hearing impaired TTY 1-800-843-3557, for assistance. LTC customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

- **Thrift Savings Plan Rates of Return Posted for April 2003.** The monthly G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns represent the actual total rates of return used to allocate monthly earnings for April 2003 to participant accounts, after deduction for administrative costs, trading costs, and accrued investment management fees. Percentages in () are negative returns. For more information, go to the TSP Home page at www.tsp.gov and click on Rates of Returns.

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
April 2003	0.33%	0.83%	8.26%	8.31%	9.82%
<u>Last 12 Months</u> (5/1/2002 - 4/30/2003)	4.55%	10.63%	(13.23%)	(15.02%)	(16.21%)

- **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Participant Statements.** TSP will mail participant statements beginning mid-May 03. The statement presents all information about account activity during the last 6 months. Don't forget to check this information carefully and keep the statement for future reference. Employees who do not receive their statement by 10 Jun should contact the TSP Service Office at (504) 255-8777. Employees who identify an error in the amount of contributions or loan payments posted to their account have 6 months from the time the error was made to report it BEST or their payroll office.